(c) if so, whether any final decision, in this regard, has been taken and by when a legislation in this regard is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) National Commission for Women has made some recommendations for the amendment of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and section 304B IPC (dowry death). The main points of the recommendations are given in the enclosed statement. [Refer to the statement appended to the answer to USQ 1073 part (b)]. The recommendations are presently under examination in the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It will not be possible at this stage to indicate any definite time-frame for a final decision to be taken in the matter or any legislation to be introduced in this regard.

Legislation for prevention of molestation and violence against women

1086. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has declared that a new legislation would be formed over the growing incidents of molestation and violence against women, and the Minister has called for stringent measures to check the menace;

(b) whether the Minister has also sought comments of the States about the proposed Bill for protection of women from sexual harassment at workplaces;

(c) whether a two-day State Women and Child Development Minister's Conference was held recently;

(d) if so, the main points dicussed; and

(e) how many State Governments have agreed to have such type of legislation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) No such declaration has been made. However, there is need for implementation of the laws meant for the protection and empowerment of women.

(b) An earlier draft of the bill on protection of women from sexual harassment was circulated for comments to all State Governments and UT administrations in the year 2005.

(c) Yes, Sir. The Conference was held on 28th and 29th January, 2008.

(d) The Conference deliberated upon the status and efficacy of programmes, schemes and legislations of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, specifically, ICDS, child protection, women's social & economic empowerment, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, female foeticide and declining sex ratio and molestation and violence against women.

(e) Apropos the reply to part (b) above, no State Government expressed any opposition to a suitable law as such on the subject.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED AND UNSTARRED QUESTIONS SET FOR FRIDAY, THE 7TH MARCH, 2008*

Suicide by **farmers**

t* 121. SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH:
DR. PRABHA THAKUR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the last few years incidents of suicide by the farmers in lakhs of number have come to the notice of Government;

(b) If so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether Government has formulated any action plan to improve the economic situation of the farmers and to make agriculture a profitable job; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) A Statement indicating number of suicides by farmers during the last few years, as reported by the State Governments is enclosed as Statement. *(See* below)

(c) and (d) Based on the Revised Draft National Policy for Farmers submitted by the National Commission on Farmers, the Government has approved the National Policy for Farmers 2007. Various recommendations made by the Commission for rejuvenation of agriculture and allied sectors, as accepted by the Government, have been incorporated in the National Policy for Farmers. These include, *inter alia,* asset reforms in respoect of land, water, livestock, fisheries and bio-resources; support services and inputs like application of frontier technologies for improving productivity in a sustainable manner; agricultural bio-security system; supply of good quality seeds and disease-free planting material; issue of soil health passbooks to the farmers and integrated nutrient and pest management system; region and crop specific implements and machinery and support services for women etc.

In addition, for revitalization of agriculture sector, Government has launched two new Schemes namely, National Food Security Mission (NFSM) to ensure adequate availabiliy of foodgrains in the country and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY) with an objective to incentivise the states so as to increase public investment in Agriculture and allied sectors and to provide flexibility and autonomy to states in the process of planning and executing Agriculture and allied sector schemes, with an outlay of Rs. 4882.48 and Rs. 25,000 crore respectively during Eleventh Plan Period. Besides, a number of initiatives, Plan Schemes and programmes including the initiatives/programmes announced in the Budget 2008-09 have been taken/initiated to address the problems faced by the farmers.

To address the problem of suicide by farmers, Government of India has approved a Rehabilitation Package amounting to Rs. 16978.69 crore, for 31 suicide prone districts spread over the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. The Package consisting of short term and long term measures is being implemented since July, 2006. It aims at establishing a sustainable and viable farming and livelihood support system through

* The sitting of the Rajya Sabha on Friday, the 7th March, 2008 was cancelled. Answers to Questions put down in the lists for the day were laid on the Table of the House on Monday, the 10th March, 2008.

t Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.